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## PEOPLE OF COLOR IN LOUISIANA

### PART II

Louisiana was transferred to Spain but was not long to be secure in the possession of that country. France again claimed her in 1800, and Napoleon, busy with his English war and realizing the dangers of a province so open to British attack as was this bounded by the Mississippi and the Gulf of Mexico, readily listened to the proposition of the United States. Twenty days after the French tri-color waved in place of the Spanish flag in the old Place d'Armes, the American stars and stripes proclaimed the land American territory. The Creoles, French though they were in spirit, in partisanship, in sympathy, could not but breathe a sigh of relief, for Napoleon had dangerous ideas concerning the freedom of slaves, and already had spoken sharply about the people of color in the province.<sup>1</sup> Were the terrors of San Domingo to be reenacted on the banks of Mississippi? The United States answered with a decided negative.

Men of color, however, were to be important factors in the maintenance of order in the province.<sup>2</sup> Laussat, the Colonial Prefect of France, placed in charge of Louisiana in 1803, tells how the old Spanish Governor Salcedo, in his

<sup>1</sup> Rose, "Life of Napoleon I," 333-336.

<sup>2</sup> As to the ability of a man of color to rise in this territory, the life of one man, recorded by the Pennsylvania Abolition Society, will furnish a good example. James Derham was originally a slave in Philadelphia, sold by his master to a physician, who employed him in the shop as an assistant in the preparation of drugs. During the war between England and America, he was sold by this physician to a surgeon, and by that surgeon to Dr. Robert Dove of New Orleans. Here he learned French and Spanish so as to speak both with ease. In 1788, he was received into the English church, when he was twenty-one and became, says the report, "one of the most distinguished physicians in New Orleans." "I conversed with him on medicine," says Dr. Rush, "and found him very learned. I thought I could give him information on the treatment of diseases, but I learned more from him that he could expect from me." *The Columbian Gazette*, II, 742-743.

anxiety to keep the province loyal to Spain, had summoned all the military officers of the militia to come to his lodgings and declare whether they intended to remain in the service of the king of Spain. "The Marquis," writes Laussat to his friend Decrès, "went so far as to exact a declaration in the affirmative from two companies of men of color in New Orleans, which were composed of all the mechanics whom that city possessed. Two of these mulattoes complained to me of having been detained twenty-four hours in prison to force them to utter the fatal yea which was desired of them." <sup>3</sup>

Within the next six years New Orleans doubled in population and that population was far from white. Those refugees from San Domingo who had escaped to Cuba were now forced by the hostilities between France and Spain again to become exiles. Within sixty days between May and July in one year alone, 1809, thirty-four vessels from Cuba set ashore in the streets of New Orleans nearly 5,800 persons, 4,000 of these being free colored and blacks.<sup>4</sup> Later others came from Cuba, Guadaloupe and neighboring islands until they amounted to 10,000. The first American governor of Louisiana certainly had no easy task before him. Into the disorganized and undisciplined city, enervated by frequent changes and corruption of government, torn by dissensions, uncertain whether its allegiance was to Spain or to France, reflecting the spirit of upheaval and uncertainty which made Europe one huge brawl—into this cosmopolitan city swarmed ten thousand white, yellow and black West Indian islanders, some with means, most of them destitute, all of them desperate. Americans, English, Spanish, French—all cried aloud. Claiborne begged the consuls of Havana and Santiago de Cuba to stop the movement; the laws forbidding the importation of slaves were more rigidly enforced; and free people of color were ordered point blank to leave the city.<sup>5</sup> Where they were to go, how-

<sup>3</sup> Gayarré, III, p. 595.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, IV, p. 218.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 219.

ever, no one seemed to care, and as the free people of color had no intention of going, the question was not discussed. For some reason the enforcement of the law was not insisted upon. When a meagre attempt was made, it proved unsuccessful, and the complexion of Louisiana was definitely settled for many years to come.<sup>6</sup>

The administration of Governor Claiborne from 1803 to 1816 was one long wrestle, not only with the almost super-human task of adjusting a practically foreign country to American ideals of government but of wrestling with the color problem. Slowly and insidiously it had come to dominate every other problem. The people of color had helped to settle the territory, had helped to make it commercially important, had helped to save it from the Indians and from the English, and they seemed likely to become the most important factors in its history.

The Louisianians were greatly mortified at the enforcement by Claiborne of the law against the importation of slaves. They were undecided whether to blame Claiborne for enforcing the law or to blame Philadelphia for harboring the first Abolition Society which met in 1804 and promulgated doctrines as dangerous as those of Napoleon regarding human slavery. Slaves were daily smuggled into the territory by way of Barataria Bay, the lakes, and all the innumerable outlets to Spanish possessions.<sup>7</sup> Claiborne was alternately accused of conniving at this smuggling and abused for trying to suppress it. Jean and Pierre Lafitte, infamous in history for their feats of smuggling and piracy, made capital of the slave trade, and but for their stalwart Africans would have been captured and hung long before Louisiana had suffered from their depredations and the bad reputation which they gave her. The Lafittes appealed to the romantic temperament of the French, and the fact that the American governor, Claiborne, had set a price upon

<sup>6</sup> Gayarré, IV, p. 219.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 229.

their heads was almost sufficient in itself to secure them immunity from the Creoles.<sup>8</sup>

"Americans," says Grace King, "were despised and ridiculed." Men, women and children of color, free and slave, united to insult the American Negro or—"Mericaïn Coquin," as they called him. The French and the Spaniards, moreover, united in using the people of color to further their own interests, or to annoy the new American government while the intrigues of Spain and France weakened the feeble territory. It was difficult to know how to treat this almost alien people. Governor Claiborne found the militia in the territory entirely inadequate for the purposes of protection, should Spain make an attempt to wrest the land back from the United States. In one of his anxious despatches to headquarters he says plaintively: "With respect to the Mulatto Corps in this city, I am indeed at a loss to know what policy is best to pursue."<sup>9</sup> The corps, old and honorable, as it was, had been ignored by the previous Legislative Council, and was now disaffected. The neglect had "soured them considerably with the American government."<sup>10</sup>

Claiborne, however, determined to procure a census of free people of color in the city. He estimated that there were five hundred capable of bearing arms, and added that he would do all in his power to conciliate them, and secure a return of their allegiance to the American government.

<sup>8</sup> Grace King tells a pretty story of the saving of Jean Lafitte's life. On the very day that a price was set upon his head by Gov. Claiborne he was invited to be the guest at a plantation, and almost at the same instant there arrived unexpectedly Mrs. Claiborne, the wife of the governor. The hostess, with quick presence of mind, introduced the gentleman to the wife of the governor as Monsieur Clement, and then hurriedly went out of the room, leaving her guests together. She called Henriette, her confidential servant, and looking her straight in the eyes, said: "Henriette, Gov. Claiborne has set a price upon Monsieur Lafitte's head. Anyone who takes him a prisoner and carries him to the governor will receive five hundred dollars reward, and M. Lafitte's head will be cut off. Send all the other servants away; set the table yourself, and wait on us yourself. Remember to call M. Lafitte, M. Clement—and be careful before Mme. Claiborne." The colored woman responded with perfect tact and discretion. See Grace King, "New Orleans, the Place and the People," 204.

<sup>9</sup> Gayarré, IV, p. 127.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 127.

One Stephen, a free black man, had appeared before Claiborne and declared on oath that the people of color were being tampered with by the Spanish government.<sup>11</sup> This caused the governor to redouble his energies toward conciliating the doubtful militia. Louisiana bordered on the Spanish territory, Texas, and a constant desertion of people of color to this foreign land continued, Spain doing all in her power to make the flight of these free men and slaves interesting. Colored men were furnished the Spanish cockades, and dances were given in their honor when they escaped over the border. The disaffected adherents of Aaron Burr on the border-land of Texas kept up the underhand warfare against the government, through these people of color. Perhaps it was as a means of protection that Louisiana and a much restricted Louisiana was admitted as a State in 1812.

Writers describing the New Orleans of this period agree in presenting a picture of a continental city, most picturesque, most un-American, and as varied in color as a street of Cairo. There they saw French, Spaniards, English, Bohemians, Negroes, mulattoes; varied clothes, picturesque white dresses of the fairer women, brilliant cottons of the darker ones. The streets, banquettes, we should say, were bright with color, the nights filled with song and laughter. Through the scene, the people of color add the spice of color; in the life, they add the zest of romance.<sup>11a</sup>

Such was the situation in the city of New Orleans. The condition of the free people of color in Louisiana as a whole, however, and the form of slavery which existed in that state are somewhat difficult to determine because of the conflicting statements of observers who did not distinguish between the conditions obtaining in the metropolis and those obtaining in the parishes. All seem to agree, however, that on account of the extensive miscegenation so common in the French colonies there had been produced in that state various classes of mixed breeds enjoying degrees of freedom in conformity with their proximity or separation from the

<sup>11</sup> Gayarré, IV, p. 131.

<sup>11a</sup> King, "New Orleans: The Place and Its People."

white race. Paul Alliot said in his reflection on Louisiana in 1803: "The population of that city counting the people of all colors is only twelve thousand souls. Mulattoes and Negroes are openly protected by the Government. He who was to strike one of those persons, even though he had run away from him, would be severely punished. Also twenty whites could be counted in the prisons of New Orleans against one man of color. The wives and daughters of the latter are much sought after by the white men, and white women at times esteem well-built men of color."<sup>12</sup> Elsewhere the same writer, in speaking of the white men, said that few among them married, choosing rather to live with their slaves or with women of color.<sup>13</sup>

A generation later the situation was apparently the same despite the reactionary forces which seemed likely to change the social order. While on a tour through this country in 1818 Evans saw much in New Orleans to interest him. "Here," said he, "may be seen in the same crowds, Quadroons, mulattoes, Samboes, Mustizos, Indians, and Negroes; and there are other commixtures which are not yet classified. As to the Negroes, I may add that whilst in this place I saw one who was perfectly white. This peculiarity, however, is rarely witnessed in this country."<sup>14</sup> Thereafter the tendency seemed to be not to check promiscuous miscegenation but to debase the offspring resulting therefrom.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Paul Alliot's Reflections in Robertson's "Louisiana under the Rule of Spain," I, p. 67.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 103, 111.

<sup>14</sup> Evans, "A Pedestrian's Tour, etc." Thwaites, "Early Western Travels," VIII, 336.

<sup>15</sup> Harriet Martineau painted in 1837 a picture of this society, showing how the depravity of the settlers had worked out. "The Quadroon girls of New Orleans," said she, "are brought up by their mothers to be what they have been, the mistresses of white gentlemen. The boys are some of them sent to France; some placed on land in the back of the State; and some are sold in the slave market. They marry women of a somewhat darker color than their own; the women of their own color objecting to them, '*ils sont si degoutants!*' The girls are highly educated, externally, and are, probably, as beautiful and accomplished a set of women as can be found. Every young man early selects one and establishes her in one of those pretty and peculiar houses, whole rows

In the midst of this confusing commixture of population and unstable society of mixed breeds of three nations the second war between England and the United States came like a thunderbolt to upset the already seething administration of Claiborne. As of old, Louisiana was the strategic point upon which both powers had their eyes. It was the intention of England to weaken the United States by capturing Louisiana and handing it over in its entirety to the Spanish government waiting greedily over the border of Texas. On the same day that Gov. Claiborne sent the communication to the Secretary of War containing this astounding piece of information which he had obtained from authentic sources, he wrote to General Jackson, the despised "red Indian" of the aristocratic Louisianians. He had reason, he said in this letter, to doubt the loyalty of many men in the state, because of their known adherence to foreign nations, but he hopefully adds, "Among the militia of New Orleans there is a battalion of chosen men of color, organized under a special act of Legislature, of which I inclose a copy for your perusal."

Under the Spanish Government the men of color of New Orleans were always relied upon in time of difficulties, and on several occasions evinced in the field the greatest firmness and courage.<sup>16</sup> "With these gentlemen, Colonel Fortier and Major Lacoste, and the officers attached to companies," Claiborne continued, "I had an interview on yesterday, and assured them that, in the hour of peril, I should rely on their valor and fidelity to the United States. In re-

of which may be seen in the Remparts. The connexion now and then lasts for life; usually for several years. In the latter case, when the time comes for the gentleman to take a wife, the dreadful news reaches his Quadroon partner, either by letter entitling her to call the house and furniture her own, or by the newspaper which announces his marriage. The Quadroon ladies are rarely or never known to form a second connexion. Many commit suicide, more die heart-broken. Some men continue the connexion after marriage. Every Quadroon woman believes that her partner will prove an exception to the rule of desertion. Every white lady believes that her husband has been an exception to the rule of seduction." See Harriet Martineau, "Society in America," II, 326-327; see also Nuttall's Journal in Thwaites, "Early Western Travels," XIII, 309-310.

<sup>16</sup> Gayerré, IV, p. 335.



turn, they expressed their devotion to the country and their readiness to serve it.”<sup>17</sup> Claiborne then ordered the taking of a census of the men of color in the city capable of bearing arms, and found that they numbered nearly eight hundred. In his appeal to General Jackson, Claiborne said, “These men, Sir, for the most part, sustain good characters. Many of them have extensive connections and much property to defend, and all seem attached to arms. The mode of acting toward them at the present crisis, is an inquiry of importance. If we give them not our confidence, the enemy will be encouraged to intrigue and corrupt them.”<sup>18</sup> General Jackson took the cue from Governor Claiborne and enlisted the services of the battalion of men of color, addressing them in stirring and thrilling words. There were not wanting objections to this address. Its publication was delayed a few days to give him time to reconsider the matter, since advisers of Gov. Claiborne thought it a little too free with its suggestions of perfect equality between the companies. But the well-known temper of General Jackson precluded the possibility of any retraction, and the address came down in history as he originally drafted it.<sup>18a</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Gayarré, IV, p. 336.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 336.

<sup>18a</sup> He said: “Through a mistaken policy you have heretofore been deprived of a participation in the glorious struggle for national rights in which our country is engaged. This no longer exists.

As sons of freedom, you are now called upon to defend our most inestimable blessing. As Americans, your country looks with confidence to her adopted children for a valorous support as a faithful return for the advantages enjoyed under her mild and equitable government. As fathers, husbands and brothers, you are summoned to rally round the standard of the eagle to defend all which is dear in existence.

Your country, although calling for your exertions, does not wish you to engage in her cause without amply remunerating you for the services rendered. Your intelligent minds are not to be led away by false representations. Your love of honor would cause you to despise the man who would attempt to deceive you. In the sincerity of a soldier and the language of truth I address you.

To every noble-hearted, generous freeman—men of color, volunteering to serve during the present contest with Great Britain and no longer, there will be paid the same bounty in money and lands now received by the white soldiers of the United States, viz.: \$124 in money and 160 acres of land. The non-commissioned officers and privates will also be entitled to the same monthly pay and daily rations and clothes, furnished to any American soldier.

The American soldiers on the field aggregated 3,600, among whom were 430 colored. The first battalion of men of color was commanded by Major Lacoste, a wealthy white planter. In reviewing the troops, Gen. Jackson was so well pleased with Major Lacoste's battalion, that he deemed it prudent to levy a new battalion of the same description. Jean Baptiste Savary, a colored man who had fled from Santo Domingo during the struggle there, undertook, therefore, to form a battalion of his countrymen. Savary obtained the rank of captain, and was remarkably successful.<sup>19</sup> The new battalion was put under the command of Major Jean Daquin, also a native of Santo Domingo. Whether or not Major Daquin was a white man as Gayarré tells us, or a quadroon as other writers assert, is a disputed question.<sup>20</sup>

But not only was this regiment of free men of color to have all the honor of the struggle. The colored men were enlisted in more ways than one. Slaves were used in throwing up the famous entrenchments. The idea of a fortification of cotton bales, which we are told practically saved the city, was that of a colored man, a slave from Africa, who had seen the same thing done in his native country. It was the cotton breastworks that nonplussed the British. Colored men, free and slave, were used to reconnoitre, and the pirate Lafitte, true to his word, to come to the aid of Louisi-

On enrolling yourselves in companies, the Major-General commanding will select officers from your government from your white citizens. Your non-commissioned officers will be appointed from among yourselves.

Due regard will be paid to the feelings of freemen and soldiers. You will not, by being associated with white men in the same corps, be exposed to improper comparisons, or unjust sarcasm. As a distinct, independent battalion or regiment, pursuing the path of glory, you will undivided, receive the applause and gratitude of your country men.

To assure you of the sincerity of my intentions and my anxiety to engage your invaluable services to our country, I have communicated my wishes to the Governor of Louisiana, who is fully informed as to the manner of enrollment, and will give you every necessary information on the subject of this address." See Williams, "History of the Negro Race," II, 25 and 26.

<sup>19</sup> Gayarré, IV, p. 406.

<sup>20</sup> He was probably regarded as a quadroon who had been accepted by the white race. See Gayarré, IV, 406.

ana should she ever need assistance, brought in with his Baratarians a mixed horde of desperate fighters, white and black.

On the British side was a company composed of colored men, and historians like to tell of their cowardice compared with the colored men of the American side.<sup>21</sup> Evidently a scarlet coat does not well fit a colored skin. To the eternal credit of the State troops composed of the men of color, not one act of desertion or cowardice is recorded against them. There was a most lamentable exhibition of panic on the right bank of the river by the American troops, but the battalion of the men of color was not there. They were always in the front of the attack.<sup>22</sup>

In the celebration of the victory which followed in the great public square, the Place d'Armes, now Jackson Square, where a statue of the commander rears itself in the center, the colored troops came in for their share of glory.<sup>23</sup> The train which brought in the four hundred wounded prisoners was met by the colored women, the famous nurses of New Orleans, who have in every war from the Revolutionary until the Spanish-American held the reputation of being some of the best nurses in the world.

The men of color were apparently not content with winning the victory; they must furnish material for dissension for many days afterwards. When the British army withdrew from Louisiana on January 27, 1815, they carried

<sup>21</sup> Gayarré, IV, p. 451.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 427 et passim.

<sup>23</sup> For years after the Civil War, one of the most picturesque figures in New Orleans was Jordan B. Noble, who at the time of the Battle of New Orleans was a slim youth. It was his tireless beating of the drum which led to battle the American forces on the nights of December 23 and January 8. He lived to be an old man, and appeared on several occasions at the St. Charles theatre, where a great audience turned out to do him honor and give an ovation when he beat the drum again as he had on those memorable nights. The Delta records a benefit given him at the theatre in 1854. In 1851 *The New Orleans Picayune* in commenting on the celebration of the victory of New Orleans notes the presence in the line of parade of 90 colored veterans. "And who did more than they to save the city?" it asks in the midst of a highly eulogistic review of the battle. Grace King, "New Orleans, the Place and the People," 256; and Grace King's letter to A. O. Stafford in 1904.

away with them 199 slaves, whom they had acquired by the very easy method of taking them willy-nilly. The matter of having these bondmen restored to their original owners, of convincing the British that the Americans did not see the joke of the abduction caused one of the most acrimonious discussions in the history of the State. The treaty between the two countries, England and America, was distorted by both sides to read anything they wished. The English took a high stand of altruism, of a desire to free the oppressed; the Louisianians took as high a stand of wishing to grow old with their own slaves. It was an amusing incident which the slaves watched with interest. In the end the colored men were restored, and the interpretation of the treaty ceased.<sup>24</sup>

Following the War of 1812 the free people of color occupied a peculiar position in Louisiana, especially in New Orleans. There were distinct grades of society. The caste system was almost as strong as that of India. Free people of color from other states poured into Louisiana in a steady stream. It was a haven of refuge. Those were indeed halcyon times both for the Creole and the American, who found in the rapidly growing city a commercial El Dorado. For the people of color it was indeed a time of growth and acquisition of wealth. Three famous streets in New Orleans bear testimony to the importance of the colored people in the life of the city. Congo Square, one of the great open squares in the old Creole quarter, was named for the slaves who used to congregate in its limits and dance the weird dances to the tunes of blood-stirring minor strains. Those who know the weird liet-motif of Coleridge-Taylor's Bamboula dance have heard the tune of the Congo dance, which every child in New Orleans could sing. Gottschalk's *Danse des Nègres* is almost forgotten by this generation but in it he recorded the music of the West Indians. Camp Street, to-day one of the principal business streets in the city, was so called because it ran back of the old Campo de Negros.<sup>25</sup> Julia

<sup>24</sup> Gayarré, IV, pp. 517-531.

<sup>25</sup> Fortier, "Louisiana," II, p. 231.

Street, which runs along the front of the so-called New Basin, a canal of great commercial importance, connecting, as it does, the city with Lake Pontchartrain, and consequently, the greater gulf trade, was named for one Julia, a free woman of color, who owned land along the banks.<sup>26</sup> What Julia's cognomen was, where she came from, and whence she obtained the valuable property are hidden in the silent grave in which time encloses mere mortals. Somewhere in the records of the city it is recorded that one Julia, a F. W. C. (free woman of color), owned this land.

The minor distinctions of complexion and race so fiercely adhered to by the Creoles of the old regime were at their height at this time. The glory and shame of the city were her quadroons and octoroons, apparently constituting two aristocratic circles of society,<sup>27</sup> the one as elegant as the other, the complexions the same, the men the same, the women different in race, but not in color, nor in dress, nor in jewels. Writers on fire with the romance of this continental city love to speak of the splendors of the French Opera House, the first place in the country where grand opera was heard, and tell of the tiers of beautiful women with their jewels and airs and graces. Above the orchestra circle were four tiers, the first filled with the beautiful dames of the city; the second filled with a second array of beautiful women, attired like those of the first, with no apparent difference; yet these were the octoroons and quadroons, whose beauty and wealth were all the passports needed. The third was for the hoi polloi of the white race, and the fourth for the people of color whose color was more evident. It was a veritable sandwich of races.

With the slaves, especially those outside of New Orleans, the situation was different. The cruelty of the slave owners in the State was proverbial. To be "sent down the Mississippi" became a by-word of horror, a bogie with which slave-holders all over the South threatened their incorrigible slaves. The slave markets, the tortures of the old planta-

<sup>26</sup> Cable, "The Creoles," p. 211; Grace King, "New Orleans," 260.

<sup>27</sup> Martineau, "Society in America," p. 326 et passim.

tions, even those in the city, which Cable has immortalized, help to fill the pages of romance, which must be cruel as well as beautiful.

The reaction against the Negro was then well on its way in Louisiana and evidences of it soon appeared in New Orleans where their condition for some time yet differed much from that of the blacks in the parishes. Moved by the fear of a rising class of mixed breeds resulting from miscegenation, the whites endeavored to diminish their power by restraining the free people of color from exercising influence over the slaves, who were becoming insurrectionary as in the case of those of the parish of St. John the Baptist in 1811. The State had in 1807 and 1808 made additional provisions for the regulation of the coming of free Negroes into Louisiana, but when there came reports of the risings of the blacks in various places in the Seaboard States, and of David Walker's appeal to Negroes to take up arms against their masters, it was deemed wise to prohibit the immigration of free persons into that Commonwealth. In 1830 it was provided that whoever should write, print, publish or distribute anything having the tendency to produce discontent among the slaves, should on conviction thereof be imprisoned at hard labor for life or suffer death at the discretion of the court. It was further provided that whoever used any language or became instrumental in bringing into the State any paper, book or pamphlet inducing discontent should suffer practically the same penalty. Any person who should teach or permit or cause to be taught, any slave to read or write should be imprisoned not less than one month nor more than twelve.<sup>29</sup>

Under the revised Black Code of Louisiana special care was taken to prevent free Negroes from coming in contact with bondmen. Free persons of color were restricted from obtaining licenses to sell spirituous liquors, because of the fear that intoxicants distributed by this class might excite

<sup>28</sup> Channing, "The Jeffersonian System," 84.

<sup>29</sup> For a general sketch see Ballard and Curtis's "A Digest of the Statutes of the State of Louisiana," pp. 65 et seq.

the Negroes to revolt. The law providing that there should be at least one white person to every thirty slaves on a plantation was re-enacted so as to strengthen the measure, the police system for the control of Negroes was reorganized to make it more effective, and slaves although unable to own property were further restricted in buying and selling. Those taken by masters beyond the limits of the State were on their return to be treated as free Negroes. But it was later provided on the occasion of the institution of proceedings for freedom by a slave who had been carried to the Northwest Territory<sup>30</sup> that "no slave shall be entitled to his or her freedom under the pretense that he or she has been, with or without the consent of his or her owner, in a country where slavery does not exist or in any of the States where slavery is prohibited."<sup>31</sup>

After that the condition of the Negroes in Louisiana was decidedly pitiable, although in certain parts of the State, as observed by Bishop Polk,<sup>32</sup> Timothy Flint,<sup>33</sup> and Frederic Law Olmsted<sup>34</sup> at various times, there were some striking exceptions to this rule. About this time Captain Marryat made some interesting remarks concerning this situation. "In the Western States," said he, "comprehending Louisiana, Arkansas, Mississippi, Georgia, and Alabama, the Negroes are, with the exception, perhaps, of the latter States, in a worst condition than they were in the West India Islands. This may be easily imagined," continued he, "when the character of the white people who inhabit the larger portion of these States is considered—a class of people, the majority of whom are without feelings of honor, reckless in their habits, intemperate, unprincipled, and lawless, many of them having fled from the Eastern States, as fraudulent bankrupts, swindlers or committers of other crimes, which have subjected them to the penitentiaries, miscreants, defying the climate, so that they can

<sup>30</sup> Dunn, "Indiana," 234; and 1 Miss. (Walker), p. 36.

<sup>31</sup> See "The Revised Statutes of Louisiana," 1852, pp. 524 et seq.

<sup>32</sup> Rhodes, "History of the United States," III, 331.

<sup>33</sup> Flint, "Recollections of the Last Ten Years," 345.

<sup>34</sup> Olmsted, "The Cotton Kingdom," II, 213.

defy the laws. Still this representation of the character of the people, inhabiting these States, must from the chaotic state of society in America be received with many exceptions. In the city of New Orleans, for instance, and in Natchez and its vicinity, and also among the planters, there are many honorable exceptions. I have said the majority: for we must look to the mass—the exceptions do prove the rule. It is evident that slaves under such masters can have but little chance of good treatment, and stories are told of them at which humanity shudders.”<sup>35</sup>

The free people of color, however, kept on amassing wealth and educating their children as ever in spite of opposition, for it is difficult to enforce laws against a race when you cannot find that race. Being well-to-do they could maintain their own institutions of learning, and had access to parochial schools. Some of them like their white neighbors, sent their sons to France and their daughters to the convents to continue their education beyond the first communion. The first free school ever opened for colored children in the United States was the “Ecole Des Orphelins Indigents,” a School for Indigent Orphans opened in 1840. Mme. Couvent, a free woman of color, died, leaving a fund in trust for the establishment and maintenance of this institution. It has been in continuous operation ever since. Later, it was aided by Aristide Mary, a well-to-do Creole of color, who left \$5,000 for its support, and by Thomy Lafon, also a colored Creole, one of the noted benefactors of the city. Until now, the instruction is in both English and French, and many children, not orphans, are willing to pay a fee to obtain there the thorough education obtainable.<sup>36</sup>

In 1859 John F. Cook, afterwards of Washington, D. C., went to New Orleans from St. Louis, Missouri, and organized a school for free children of color. This was just at the time when discontent among Southern States was rife, when there was much war-talk, and secession was imminent. Mr. Cook had violated two laws, he was an immigrant, and he

<sup>35</sup> Captain Marryat, *Diary in America*, 67–68.

<sup>36</sup> Desdunes, “*Nos Hommes et Notre Histoire*,” 32.



opened a school for children of persons of color. He continued as a successful instructor for one year, at the expiration of which he was forced to leave, being warned by one John Parsons, a barber, who had been told by his white friends that Mr. Cook was to be arrested and detained.<sup>37</sup>

Mr. Trotter, in his "Music and Some Musical People," gives unwittingly a picture of the free people of color of this epoch in fortune and education. He quotes the *New Orleans Picayune* in its testimony to their superior taste for and appreciation of the drama, particularly Shakespeare, and their sympathetic recognition of the excellence of classical music. Grace King aptly says "even the old slaves, the most enthusiastic of theatre-goers, felt themselves authorized to laugh any modern theatrical pretension to scorn."<sup>38</sup> Trotter records a number of families whose musical talent has become world-wide. The Lambert family, one of whom was decorated by the King of Portugal, became a professor in Paris, and composer of the famous *Si J'Etais Roi*, *L'Africaine*, and *La Somnambula*.<sup>39</sup> In this same field Basile Barrès also achieved unusual fame.

Natives of New Orleans remember now how some years ago Edmond Dédé came from Paris, whence he had been sent in 1857 by an appreciative townspeople to complete his musical education. He became director of the orchestra of L'Alcazar in Bordeaux, and a great friend of Gounod. When he returned to New Orleans after an absence of forty-six years to play for his native city once more, he was old, but not worn, nor bent, the fire of youth still flashed in his eye, and leaped along the bow of his violin.<sup>40</sup> One may mention a long list of famous musicians of color of the State, but our picture must be filled in rather with the broad sweep of the mass, not of the individual.

Across the cloudless sky of this era of unexampled com-

<sup>37</sup> This fact is based on the statements of the persons concerned.

<sup>38</sup> Grace King, "New Orleans," 272.

<sup>39</sup> Trotter, "Music, and Some Musical People," pp. 339-340.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 340-341; Desdunes, "Nos Hommes et Notre Histoire," pp. 117-118.

mercial, artistic and social sphere<sup>41</sup> the war cloud crept with ominous grimness. It burst and drenched the State with blood. Louisiana made ready to stand with the South. On the 23d of November, 1861, there had been a grand review of the Confederate troops stationed in New Orleans. An associated press despatch announced that the line was seven miles long. The feature of the review, however, was one regiment composed of fourteen hundred free colored men. The state militia was reorganized entirely for whites but Governor Moore ordered the men of color into the army. Another grand review followed the next spring. The *New Orleans Picayune* made the following comment. "We must also pay a deserved compliment to the companies of free colored men, all very well drilled and comfortably uniformed. Most of these companies, quite unaided by the administration, have supplied themselves with arms without regard to cost or trouble."<sup>42</sup> On the same day, one of these colored companies was presented with a flag, and every evidence of public approbation was manifested.

These men of color in New Orleans were the only organized body of Negro soldiery on the Confederate side during the Civil War. They were accepted as part of the State militia forming three regiments and two batteries of artillery. In the report of the Select Commission on the New Orleans Riots, Charles W. Gibbons testified that when the war broke out, the Confederacy called on all free people to

<sup>41</sup> The most definite picture, and the best possible of the state of the persons of color in Louisiana, is to be found in Parton's "Butler in New Orleans." History will never agree about Gen. Butler. He is alternately execrated by the South, sneered at by the North, written down by his contemporary officers, and canonized by the abolitionists. If he did nothing else worthy of record, at least he gave the splendid militia composed of the free men of color a chance to prove their loyalty to the union by entering the Civil War as fighters.

We are indebted to him for the pictures he draws of the slave population of Louisiana; of the wealth and beauty of the free men and women of color. Their population was 18,647. "The best blood of the South flows in the veins of these free people of color," he writes, "and a great deal of it, for the darkest of some of them were about the complexion of Daniel Webster." Parton, "General Butler in New Orleans," p. 517.

<sup>42</sup> *New Orleans Picayune*, Feb. 9, 1862.

do something for the seceding States, and if they did not a committee was appointed to look after them, to rob, kill, and despoil their property. Gibbons himself was advised by a policeman to enlist on the Confederate side or be lynched. This accounts for the seeming disloyalty of these free men of color.<sup>43</sup> The first victories of the South made their leaders overconfident thereafter and the colored troops were dismissed.

When Unionists finally got control of New Orleans they found it a city of problems. Wherever there was a Union fort, slaves, the famous "contrabands of war," made their appearance, and in a few months General Butler, then in command, found himself face to face with one of the most serious situations ever known in the history of a State. Obviously, the only thing to do was to free all of the slaves, but with Gen. Hunter's experience in South Carolina to warn him, and with Lincoln's caution, Butler was forced to fight the problem alone. He did the best he could under the circumstances with this mass of black and helpless humanity. The whipping posts were abolished; the star cars—early Jim Crow street cars—were done away with. Those slaves who had been treated with extreme cruelty by their masters were emancipated, and by enforcing the laws of England and France, which provided that no citizen of either country should own slaves, many more were freed. But the problem increased, the camps filled with runaway slaves, the feeling grew more intense, and the situation more desperate every day. Gen. Butler asked repeatedly for aid and reinforcement from the North. Vicksburg was growing stronger, Port Hudson above the city became a menace with its increasing Confederate batteries, and Mobile and a dozen camps near the city made the condition alarming. No help coming from the North, General Butler turned to the free men of color in the city for aid, and as usual, they responded gallantly to his appeal.

The free people of color in Louisiana then furnished the first colored contingent of the Federal Army, just as they

<sup>43</sup> Report of the Select Committee on the New Orleans Riots, p. 126.

had furnished the first colored contingent of the Confederate Army.<sup>44</sup> The army records likewise show that Louisiana furnished more colored troops for the war than any other State. By the 27th of September, 1862, a full regiment of free men of color entered the service of the government, many of them being taken over from the State militia. It was in the beginning called the First Regiment of the Louisiana Native Guards. In June, 1863, its designation was changed to the First Regiment Corps D'Afrique, and later to the 73d Regiment U. S. C. Infantry. In October, 1862, another regiment was formed and the following month a regiment of heavy artillery was organized. About the same time a fourth regiment of men of color answered the call. Gen. Butler was succeeded in Louisiana by General Banks, who was so pleased with the appearance and drill of the colored regiments, that he issued an order for the organization of more in 1863, contemplating 18 regiments, comprising infantry, artillery, and cavalry. These were entirely officered by colored men, at first, but, as Col. Lewis tersely puts it, after the battle of Port Hudson,<sup>45</sup> a "steeple-chase was made

<sup>44</sup> Ficklen, "Reconstruction in Louisiana," 121.

<sup>45</sup> From Ex-Lieutenant Governor Antoine we have a statement as to how the troops were organized at Baton Rouge. Of the gallant officers of this first regiment, one man lives to tell of its glories. This was Col. James Lewis, who was in command for four months at Port Hudson.

<sup>46</sup> The battle of Port Hudson, like the battle of New Orleans, is almost too well known to be told of. It takes its place naturally in history with desperate fights, reminding one somewhat of the battles of Balaklava. It was early in the morning of May 27, 1863, that the engagement began. The colored men in line numbered 1,080. When the order for assault was given they charged the fort, which belched forth its flame and shot and shell. The slaughter was horrible, but the line never wavered. Into the mill of death the colored troops hurled themselves. The colors were shot through and almost severed from the staff; the color-sergeant, Anselmas Planciancois, was killed, and two corporals struggled for the honor of bearing the flag from his dying hands. One of them was killed.

The bravest hero of the day was Capt. André Caillieux, whose name all Louisianians remember with a thrill of pride. He was a freeman of West Indian extraction, and fond of boasting of his blackness. With superb heroism and splendid magnetism he led his men time and again into the very "jaws of death" in the assault, and fell at the front in one last heroic effort within fifty yards of the fort.

by the white men to take our places." <sup>47</sup> These troops thereafter acquitted themselves with great honor in this battle and also at that of Milliken's Bend.

The Emancipation Proclamation of January, 1863, was a most complicated matter in Louisiana, for the reason that out of the forty-eight parishes in the State, thirteen were under federal control, and consequently the slaves there were left in their original state. Many of the masters even in those parishes where the slaves were declared emancipated sent their most valuable slaves to Alabama and Texas, some

"Still forward and charge for the guns," said Caillieux,  
And his shattered sword-arm was the guidon they knew;  
But a fire rakes the flanks and a fire rakes the van,  
He is down with the ranks that go down as one man.

A correspondent of the *New York Times* gave a most glowing account of the battle. "During the time the troops rallied, they were ordered to make *six distinct charges*, losing 37 killed, 155 wounded, and sixteen missing. . . . The deeds of heroism performed by these colored men were such as the proudest white men might emulate. . . . I could fill your columns with startling tales of their heroism. Although repulsed in an attempt which, situated as things were, was almost impossible, these regiments, though badly cut up, are still on hand, and burning with a passion ten times hotter from their fierce baptism of blood." See Williams, "History of the Negro Race," II, 321.

The battle of Milliken's Bend will always rank as one of the hardest fought engagements in the Civil War. It was an important point on the river, because it commanded Vicksburg, and in General Grant's scheme to effect the reduction of that city, it was necessary to control this point. The engagement was on June 6, 1863, and continued from three in the morning until twelve noon. Never did men fight with greater courage against such odds at the point of the bayonet than did these colored troops. The appalling list of casualties shows how they stood the test. Of the officers in the colored forces, seven were killed, nine wounded, three missing. Of the enlisted men, 123 killed, 182 wounded, 113 missing. In commenting on this battle, Schouler, in his history of the United States, speaks of the great bravery shown by the troops, and points out there was a sudden change of opinion in the South about enlisting colored troops on the side of the Confederacy. "Many of the clear-sighted leaders of this section proposed seriously to follow the Northern President's example,—and arm Negro slaves as soldiers." He adds: "That strange conclusion, had it ever been reached, would perhaps have reunited North and South eventually in sentiment,—by demonstrating at length the whole fallacy upon which the social difference of sections had so long rested. For as a Confederate writer expressed it, 'if the Negro was fit to be a soldier, he was not fit to be a slave.'" Schouler, "History of U. S.," Vol. VI, p. 407; and Williams, "History of the Negro Race," II, 326-328.

<sup>47</sup> Colonel Lewis's statement.

of them themselves fleeing with them. In parishes far removed from Union headquarters, news of the Emancipation Proclamation did not reach the slaves until long after it had been issued. Even then, in many cases, the proclamation had to be read at the point of the sword, federal soldiers compelling the slave owners to tell their chattels the news.<sup>48</sup>

From the time of the accession of General Banks to 1876, the history of Louisiana becomes a turmoil of struggle, centering around the brother in black.<sup>49</sup> It is no longer romance; it is grim war, and the colored man is the struggle, not the cause of it. Political parties in 1862 were many and various. The Free State party was in favor of abolishing slavery, but wanted representation based altogether on the white population. This was opposed by the Union Democrat party, which repudiated secession, but wished slavery continued or rather revived, believing that emancipation was only a war measure, and that after cessation of hostilities, slavery could be reestablished. But the plans of both parties fell to the ground.<sup>50</sup> The colored man became more and more of a political factor from day to day.

Cognomens here too proved to be another difficulty. Louisiana had two classes of colored men, freedmen and free men, a delicate, but carefully guarded distinction, the latter distinctly aristocratic. In 1863, the free men of color held a meeting and appealed to Governor Shepley for permission to register and vote. In the address to him, they reviewed their services to the United States from the time of General Jackson through the Civil War, and stated that they were then paying taxes on over \$9,000,000. Several petitions of this sort failed to move General Banks,<sup>51</sup> for he thought it unfeasible to draw the line between free men of color and the recently emancipated Negroes.

The war of Reconstruction in Louisiana was fairly well launched in the Constitutional Convention of 1864. The

<sup>48</sup> Based on the statements of slaves.

<sup>49</sup> Rhodes, "History of the U. S.," VII, 104 et seq.; Schouler, "History of U. S.," VI, 245 et seq.

<sup>50</sup> Ficklen, "Reconstruction in Louisiana," 47 et seq.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 64, 65.

issue on which this body divided was what treatment should be accorded the freedmen. The two parties had much difficulty in reaching an agreement.<sup>52</sup> P. M. Tourne was sent to Washington to see President Lincoln. He had already suggested the ratification of the Emancipation Proclamation and the education of the colored youth.<sup>53</sup> In a letter congratulating the recently elected Governor Hahn on his election as the "first free-state governor of Louisiana" in 1864, Lincoln suggested suffrage for the more intelligent Negroes, and those who had served the country in the capacity of soldiers. This letter of Lincoln's, says Blaine, was the first proposition from any authentic source to endow the Negro with the right of suffrage.<sup>54</sup> In his last public utterance on April 11, 1865, Lincoln again touched the subject of suffrage in Louisiana, repeating that he held it better to extend to the more intelligent colored men the elective franchise, giving the recently emancipated a prize to work for in obtaining property and education.<sup>55</sup> The Convention tried in vain to declare what constituted a Negro, giving it up in disgust. It did abolish slavery in general; granted suffrage to those whites who were loyal to the government; and to colored men according to educational and property qualifications. In 1865, the Thirteenth Amendment was ratified and the body adjourned.

The culmination of the fight between the Democrat and the Radical was in the struggle over the adoption of the Fourteenth Amendment in July, 1866. An attempt was made to re-open the Constitutional Convention of 1864.<sup>56</sup> The delegates, who favored the reopening of the convention, formed in the streets of New Orleans, and proceeded to march to the famous Mechanics Hall, the scene of almost every po-

<sup>52</sup> In the meanwhile, Confederates had set up a capital at Shreveport, and their governor recommended Negro conscripts in the Confederate army. His reasoning was acute and clear: He said, "The Negro must play an important part in the war. He caused the fight, and he must have his portion of the burden to bear." See Ficklen, "Reconstruction," 63.

<sup>53</sup> Ficklen, "Reconstruction," 63.

<sup>54</sup> Blaine's "Twenty Years of Congress," II, 39, 40.

<sup>55</sup> Lincoln, Address of, April 11, 1865.

<sup>56</sup> 39 Cong. House of Representatives, No. 16.

litical riot in the history of the city. The paraders became involved in a brawl with the white spectators; the police were called in; and the colored members of the convention and their white sympathizers fled to the hall where they attempted to barricade themselves. A general fight ensued, and over two hundred were killed.<sup>57</sup> The effect of this riot was electrical, not only in Louisiana but in the North, where it was construed as a deliberate massacre, and an uprising against the United States Government by the unreconstructed Louisianians.<sup>58</sup>

Efforts were made to bring about changes satisfactory to all. In 1867, Sheridan, in charge of the department of Louisiana, dismissed the board of aldermen of New Orleans, on the ground that they impeded the work of reconstruction and kept the government of the city in a disorganized condition. He appointed a new board of aldermen, some of whom were men of color, and in the next month this council appointed four assistant recorders, three of whom were colored, and two colored city physicians. In this month, September, 1867, the first legal voting of the colored man under the United States Government was recorded, that being their voting for delegates to the Constitutional Convention of 1868.<sup>60</sup>

<sup>57</sup> Ficklen, "Reconstruction in Louisiana," 146-179.

<sup>58</sup> Not all Southern sympathizers saw menace in granting the Negro political privileges. Seeing it inevitable, General Beauregard wrote in 1867, "If the suffrage of the Negro is properly handled and directed, we shall defeat our adversaries with their own weapons. The Negro is Southern born. With education and property qualifications, he can be made to take an interest in the affairs of the South, and in its prosperity. He will side with the whites." Letter of Gen. Beauregard.

<sup>60</sup> With the year 1868 one of the most picturesque and splendid figures in the history of the state springs fully into the light. Pinckney Benton Stewart Pinchback had already made himself known by his efforts to recruit soldiers for the Louisiana Native Guards; by his stringent demands for the rights of the colored man on all occasions. He was the dashing young Lochinvar of the political struggle. He had made his first move in 1867 by organizing the Fourth Ward Republican Club, and had been appointed Inspector of Customs by Collector of Port Kellogg. In the Constitution of 1868 he took his definite rôle of a fighter to be feared, respected and followed—and for many a year afterwards, the history of Louisiana is written around his name. Simmons, "Men of Mark," 672.



This body proved to be an assemblage of ardent fighters for the rights of the factions they represented. Pinckney Benton Stewart Pinchback proposed the adoption of the Civil Rights Bill, and the abolition of separate schools. In the convention were proposed the most stringent of all suffrage laws which would practically disfranchise many whites. Mr. Pinchback voted against this. He saved the day for the Republican party by opposing Wickliffe and other demagogues who wished to use the vote of the colored man by promising a majority of the offices to Negroes. Pinchback maintained that offices should be awarded with reference not to race, but to education and general ability.<sup>60</sup> In this he was fiercely opposed by many who were anxious for office, but not for the good of the State.<sup>61</sup>

Louisiana did not long delay in returning to the Union. On the same day on which she voted for the constitution which restored her to the Union, H. C. Warmoth was elected governor, and Oscar J. Dunn, a colored man, Lieutenant-Governor. Pinchback was then a State senator.<sup>62</sup> When the State legislature met in New Orleans in 1868, more than half of the members were colored men. Dunn was President of the Senate, and the temporary chairman of the lower house was R. H. Isabelle, a colored man. The first act of the new legislature was to ratify the Fourteenth Amendment.<sup>63</sup>

And then ensued another halcyon period for the colored man in Louisiana, a period about which the average historian has little but sneers. Government in Louisiana by the colored man was different from that in other Southern States. There the average man who was interested in politics had wealth and generations of education and culture back of him. He was actuated by sincerest patriotism, and

<sup>60</sup> Accounts of this appeared in the *Tribune*, the best, and almost the only influential organ of the Republican party in the state, the editor of which was Dr. Roudanez, a well-to-do man of color. It was not a financial success, though a powerful factor in the political arena. Dr. Roudanez said that he spent over \$35,000 on the paper in the effort to keep up an honest organ. It was suspended in April, 1868, but was revived later.

<sup>61</sup> Journal of the Convention, 124, 192, 205 et passim.

<sup>62</sup> Simmons, "Men of Mark," 678.

<sup>63</sup> Journal of the Senate, 1868, p. 21.

while the more ignorant of the recently emancipated were too evidently under the control of the unscrupulous carpet-bagger, there were not wanting more conservative men to restrain them.

The period following the meeting of the State legislature in 1868 was a stirring one. The Louisiana free people of color had a larger share in their government than that class had in any other Southern State. Among their representatives were Lieut.-Governor Oscar J. Dunn, State Treasurer Antoine Dubuclet, State Superintendent of Education Wm. G. Brown, Division Superintendent of Education Gen. T. Morris Chester, a Pennsylvanian by birth, congressmen, William Nash, and J. Willis Menard, the first colored representative elected, although he was not seated. Col. Lewis became Sergeant of the Metropolitan Police, following his service as Collector of the Port. Upon the death of Dunn, C. C. Antoine, who had served his country as a captain in the famous Seventh Louisiana, and then in the State Senate, succeeded him. Antoine was Lieutenant-Governor for eight years, first under Governor Kellogg, and then re-elected to serve under Governor Packard.

But the most thrilling part of the whole period centers about the person of that redoubtable fighter, Pinchback. He was nominated for Governor, and to save his party accepted a compromise on the Kellogg ticket. In 1872 he ran the great railroad race with Governor Warmoth, being Lieutenant-Governor and Acting Governor in the absence of the Governor from the State. His object was to reach the capital and sign two acts of the legislature, which involved the control of the State and possibly the national government.<sup>64</sup> It was a desperate undertaking, and the story of the race, as told by Governor Pinchback himself, reads like a romance. By a clever trick and the courage to stay up and fight in the senate all night, he saved the senate to the Republicans and perpetuated their rule four years longer in Louisiana than it would have continued.<sup>65</sup>

<sup>64</sup> Pinchback's own Statement.

<sup>65</sup> Based on the statements of the persons participating in these affairs.

By the impeachment of Governor Warmoth in December, 1872, he became Acting Governor of the State until Jan., 1873, when the term expired and the Kellogg government was inaugurated, with C. C. Antoine, Lieutenant-Governor. That period when Pinchback was Governor of Louisiana was the stormiest ever witnessed in any state in the Union; but he was equal to the emergency. Then followed his long three years' fight for the seat in the United States Senate, with the defeat after the hard struggle.

The campaign of 1874 was inaugurated. The White Camelias, a league formed of Southern white men, determined to end the existing government, stood armed and ready. The Governor was garrisoned at the Custom-house, a huge citadel, and the fight was on between the White League and the Metropolitan Police. It was characteristic of this community that the fight should take place on Sunday. The struggle lasted all day, September 14, 1874, and by evening the citizens were in command of the situation. President Grant ordered troops to the place; the insurgents were ordered to disperse in five days, and the Governor resumed his office. But it was the end of the government by the men of color and their allies in the State. President Hayes, in order to conciliate his constituents in the South, withdrew federal support, and the downfall was complete.<sup>66</sup>

The history of the Reconstruction and the merits and demerits of the men who figured in that awful drama belong to the present generation. The unstable Reconstruction regime was overthrown in 1874 and the whites, eliminating the freedmen and free people of color from the government, established what they are pleased to call "home rule." The Negroes, who had served the State, however, deserved well of their constituents. It should be said to the credit of these black men that upon an investigation of the Treasurer's office which had for years been held by Antoine Dubuclet, a man of color, the committee of which Chief Justice Edward D. White of the United States Su-

<sup>66</sup> Rhodes, "History of the U. S.," VII, 287.

preme Court was then chairman, made a report practically exonerating him. Although making some criticisms as to irregularities and minor illegalities, the committee had to report that "the Treasurer certainly by a comparison deserves commendation for having accounted for all moneys coming into his hands, being in this particular a remarkable exception." A minority report signed by C. W. Keeting and T. T. Allain<sup>67</sup> thoroughly exonerated him. The expected impeachment proceedings which were to follow this investigation did not materialize.<sup>68</sup>

<sup>67</sup> Mr. T. T. Allain is now living in Chicago. He has much to say in praise of the efficient, honest and courageous men of color who administered the affairs of Louisiana during this period. Mr. Allain himself was a State Senator.

<sup>68</sup> The report consisted of answers to the following questions:

1. What was the condition of the accounts of the Treasurer connected with the verification of the entries of such accounts as well as ascertaining by such verification whether the receipts had been correctly entered and disbursed, and the cash properly and legally applied.

2. What mode of settlement had been established by the Treasurer in receiving revenue turned in by tax collectors.

3. What discrimination, if any, had been exercised in the payment of warrants.

The report in part was:

"Beyond these matters your committee find the books of the Treasurer to have been kept in an orderly manner; the disbursements have been regularly entered, and the cash presently all accounted for up to the first of January, 1877, to which period this report alone extends. These vouchers and orders are all on hand and the warrants for each payment are properly canceled. . . .

"These figures do not of necessity import proof absolute and conclusive of any undue favoritism, although by circumstances and legitimate inference they point to that conclusion. Warrants being negotiable it has been impossible to ascertain who held those outstanding, and therefore impossible to fix a proper proportion of payment, but the fact that the multitude of payments made to the same person, while other warrant holders were forced to wait, and the intimacy existing between themselves or their employees and the Treasurer are, undeniably, circumstances which, unexplained, justify at least a suspicion that these parties have enjoyed facilities, preferences and privileges at the Treasury over the general public, to which they were not entitled.

"It is true that these figures are explained by statements that the proportion paid the respective persons mentioned were only in proportion to the amount which the warrants held by them bore to the whole amount of outstanding warrants, but this explanation in itself merits notice and explanation, because of the fact that the persons named were the holders of such a large amount of warrants imply some inducement on their part to invest in them, more especially as by avocation the majority of them were not brokers but

More about the people of color in Louisiana might be written. It is a theme too large to be treated save by a master hand. It is interwoven with the poetry, the romance, the glamour, the commercial prosperity, the financial ruin, the rise and fall of the State. It is hung about with garlands, like the garlands of the cemeteries on All Saints Day; it may be celebrated in song, or jeered at in charivaris. Some day, the proper historian will tell the story. There is no State in the Union, hardly any spot of like size on the globe, where the man of color has lived so intensely, made so much progress, been of such historical importance and yet about whom so comparatively little is known. His history is like the Mardi Gras of the city of New Orleans, beautiful and mysterious and wonderful, but with a serious thought underlying it all. May it be better known to the world some day.

ALICE DUNBAR-NELSON.

employees in the Custom-House. Some of them have testified that all the warrants they held were paid. Another has refused to disclose for whom he collected. A third was a relative of a personal employee of the Treasurer. One has been shown to be a constant frequenter of his office, and must have been an intimate of the Treasurer's from the fact that he appears to have been the payee of a check for \$75,000 illegally drawn, as mentioned before. They point, at least, to the necessity of such legislation as may be adequate to prevent even possible suspicion of favoritism in the future. Under the provisions of the acts of the General Assembly, passed at the session of 1877, the danger of favoritism has been very much safeguarded and needs supplementing in only minor particulars.

"The Treasurer certainly by comparison deserves commendation for having accounted for all moneys coming into his hands, being in this particular a remarkable exception. EDWARD D. WHITE, JAMES D. HILL, SAM H. BUCK."—Report of Joint Committee to Investigate the Treasurer's Office, State of Louisiana, to the General Assembly, 1877, pp. 7-12, Majority Report.